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Week 3  
Maslow in the Digital Age  
Juneau, K. R., & Barmettler, M. J. (2008). Maslow in the Digital Age. In L. A.   
     Tomei (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Information Technology Curriculum Integration*   
     (pp. 559-566). Retrieved from Books 24x7 database. (9781599048819)

I am already well-versed in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs which is why I chose this article. Because of this and because of the extensive time I have spent contributing to, participating in, and discussing online communities there was little in the article that was new to me. In truth, the article did little other than affirm conclusions I have come to on my own.

One area the article did enlighten me in regard to Maslow’s hierarchy were exceptions. While I had not heard of them prior to this, each one does make sense. The starving artist putting creative endeavors before basic needs, the driven executive putting self-esteem above love and belonging, and martyrs who “will sacrifice everything for a cause” were some of the examples given where higher needs can be pursued without the pre-requisite needs being met.

An area of the internet phenomenon I have examined and discussed at length is the issue of online anonymity. I agree with the authors that this can give a sense of safety where people will often open up and reveal parts of themselves they otherwise keep hidden in their everyday life. Often these people feel their need to belong or be loved will be threatened by revealing these sides of themselves to those they care about in their lives.

I also agree with the authors that the internet provides a forum for people to gain esteem and recognition for their ideas and/or talents. I have participated in numerous forums where people trade ideas about parenting, education, photography, Star Wars theories, politics, and programming. In each one, when a community forms because of extended interactions, experts tend to emerge. I have been fortunate to have been an expert on a couple of occasions. I can say from personal experience that such recognition can be very esteem building.

All in all, I feel the article does a good job of looking at how the internet and our social interactions through the lens of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. I, like Alfie Kohn, who is referenced as a critic of Maslow in the article, question some of Maslow’s assumptions about human nature. This does not stop me, however, from appreciating the way his ideas of need fulfillment can help us understand why people function in the ways they do and how their environments, digital or otherwise, can influence them as they look to fulfill their needs.